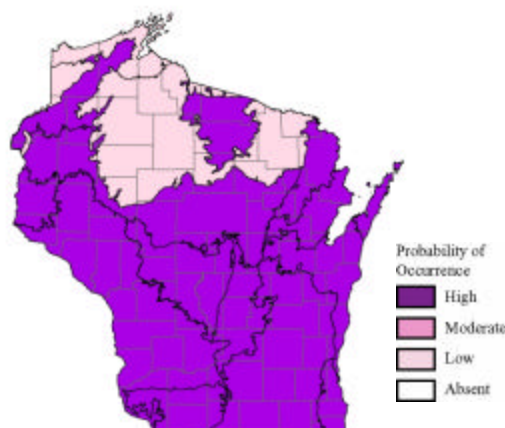


## Vesper Sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*)

### Species Assessment Scores\*

State rarity:	3
State threats:	4
State population trend:	5
Global abundance:	2
Global distribution:	2
Global threats:	3
Global population trend:	4
Mean Risk Score:	3.3
Area of importance:	4

\* Please see the [Description of Vertebrate Species Summaries \(Section 3.1.1\)](#) for definitions of criteria and scores.



### Ecological Landscape Associations

Please note that this is not a range map. Shading does not imply that the species is present throughout the Landscape, but represents the probability that the species occurs somewhere in the Landscape.

### Landscape-community Combinations of Highest Ecological Priority

Ecological Landscape	Community
Central Sand Plains	Oak barrens
Central Sand Plains	Pine barrens
Central Sand Plains	Sand prairie
Northeast Sands	Bracken grassland
Northeast Sands	Pine barrens
Northwest Sands	Pine barrens
Southeast Glacial Plains	Dry prairie
Southwest Savanna	Dry prairie
Western Coulee and Ridges	Dry prairie
Western Coulee and Ridges	Oak barrens
Western Coulee and Ridges	Sand prairie

### Threats and Issues

- Succession of grassland and barrens habitats to shrubland and woodland (with a canopy cover of >30%) due to lack of fire or other management to suppress woody growth is a threat.
- Loss of grassland habitat due to housing and commercial development is a serious threat.
- Intensification of agriculture, including early and frequent harvest of hay and conversion of short grassland to row crops or to tree plantations that are allowed to mature beyond approximately 10 years. Species will nest in row crops, but a majority of nests are destroyed due to modern field operations. Any habitat conversion that removes areas of exposed soil, which are a preferred feature for this species is a threat.
- This species does use shrubs and small trees for song perches; however, invasive woody plants can degrade quality of nesting grasslands, if woody canopy cover exceeds 30%.
- Aggressive invasive forbs, including yellow parsnip, crown vetch, leafy spurge, thistles, reed canary grass, and some goldenrods can degrade habitat quality of grasslands for this species.

- Agricultural pesticides may pose a threat in certain cases on winter, migration, and breeding grounds.
- Human disturbances on preferred habitat during the breeding season.

**Priority Conservation Actions**

- Maintain large oak or pine barrens habitats.
- Continue agricultural set-aside programs, especially those that allow for permanent protection of preferred habitats.
- Work with planning and zoning authorities to protect valuable open grassland landscapes from being converted to urban or suburban development.
- Partnerships are key for conserving this species in working agricultural landscapes.